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NOV

The West Coast Avengers™

Stan Lee PRESENTS THE BEST OF THE OLD AND THE BEST OF THE NEW!

HAWKEYE AND MOCKINGBIRD, TIGRA, WONDER MAN AND IRON MAN

HAVE OPENED A *SECOND HEADQUARTERS* FOR THE *EARTH'S MIGHTIEST SUPER HEROES*, AND BECOME--

The WEST COAST AVENGERS

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SONS!

LAST MONTH HAWKEYE AND FRIENDS FOUGHT ULTRON TWELVE OUT WEST, WHILE THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH FOUGHT THE BLACK TALON BACK EAST (AND IN THEIR OWN *PREMIERE ISH*)!

THING WAS, THAT WASN'T TWO SEPARATE CASES! THAT WAS ONE *VERY BIG ONE*...

TOO BAD THIS COULDN'TA' BEEN UNDER MORE *CONGENIAL CIRCUMSTANCES*, FOLKS--

-- BUT IF WHAT I SUSPECT'S *TRUE*, WE'RE ALL IN GREAT *DANGER!*

WELL, WELCOME TO NEW JERSEY *ANYWAY*, HAWKEYE!

SORRY WE HAVE TO MEET IN A *MOTEL*, BUT WE STILL DON'T HAVE A *HOUSE!*

HEY, THE MIDDLE OF THE *TURNPIKE'D* BE FINE WITH ME RIGHT NOW!

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BEING AN AVENGER IS LIKE PLAYING ON THE SAN FRANCISCO 49ers! THERE AREN'T FIVE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM, THERE'S ONE TEAM!

AND DESPITE THEIR SEPARATE LOCATIONS AND DIRECTIONS THESE DAYS, THEY WILL ALWAYS BE ONE TEAM!

IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME A WHILE TO GET USED TO YOUR NEW ARMOR, TONY!

IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME LONGER TO GET USED TO YOUR NEW VOICE, VIZH!

COMING TO NEW JERSEY WON'T GET YOUR WEST COASTERS IN TROUBLE, WILL IT, CLINT?

HEY, YOU KNOW NEW YORKERS, WANDA-- THEY THINK THE WORLD ENDS AT THE HUDSON RIVER, SO EVERYTHING WEST OF THAT SHOULD BE OURS!

YEAH? YOU TELL THAT TO THE WASP!

WELL, TO GET THE GOVERNMENT OFF THE VISION'S BACK,* WE HAD TO QUIT THE GROUP, SO WE WON'T TELL HER!

BUT WHERE'S YOUR WIFE, CLINT? DIDN'T SHE COME WITH YOU?

OH, uh-- MOCKINGBIRD'S MINDING THE STORE FOR US BACK IN L.A.--!

*AFTER THE EVENTS OF AVENGERS #256.

I CAN'T, uh, PLAY FAVORITES, YOU KNOW--!"

NO! I WILL NOT STAY BEHIND! QUIT FOISTING THE STAY-AT-HOME JOBS OFF ON ME! I'M NOT A LITTLE DAISY!

LISTEN, TIGRA, I'M THE CHAIR-MAN HERE--!

RELAX, YOU TWO! I'LL VOLUNTEER!

TIGRA NEEDS A CONFIDENCE BOOST--!

WELL, GOOD FOR YOU, CLINT! I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO BE APART FROM MY HUSBAND!

YEAH, WELL--!

I'M TOLD TIGRA WALKED OUT ON THE AVENGERS ONCE, SAYIN' SHE WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH!* SO WHY SHOULDN'T I BE LEERY OF HER IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS?

WE'RE JUST GETTIN' STARTED! I DON'T WANNA LOSE ANYBODY--!

LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, SHALL WE...?

*AVENGERS #216.

OKAY, HERE'S WHY I *CALLED* THIS MEETING! YESTERDAY MORNING *HANK PYM* SHOWED UP AT OUR COMPOUND, TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE NEW *GOLIATH* WE CAPTURED!

"I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *THINKIN'*, BUT HE SAYS HE *DOESN'T* WANT TO REJOIN THE GROUP! *TOO BAD*, TOO, 'CAUSE WE COULDA *USED* 'IM--

"-- WHEN THAT CRAZY *ROBOT* HE BUILT, *ULTRON*, ATTACKED THE REST OF US!

"NATURALLY, WE FIGURED ULTRON WAS MAKING ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO TRASH SOME *AVENGERS*--

"-- BUT *THEN* HE SHOWED UP WITH THE *MAN-APE*, OF ALL PEOPLE-- AND FREED *GOLIATH* WHILE HE WAS CAPTURING *HANK* AND *WONDER MAN!*

"WELL, HE'D NEVER WORKED WITH *THOSE* GUYS BEFORE, OR CARED ABOUT *SIMON*--!"

I *SEE!* AND *WE* WERE ATTACKED BY AN ARMY OF *ZOMBIES* COMMANDED BY THE *BLACK TALON* AND *NEKRA*, WHO WANTED *ME* BUT SETTLED FOR *WANDA!*

"THEN WHEN I INFILTRATED THE *CRYPT* WHERE THEY WERE HOLDING HER, I DISCOVERED A SPECIAL ZOMBIE -- ONE WHO LOOKED VERY MUCH LIKE THE ORIGINAL *SIMON WILLIAMS*--

"-- AND I FOUND THE ONE WHO HATES *BOTH* SIMON AND MYSELF BEYOND ALL *REASON*-- SIMON'S *BROTHER*, THE *GRIM REAPER!*

"--THE ORDINARY MAN WHO BECAME *WONDER MAN*, AND WHOSE *BRAIN PATTERNS* WERE THE BASIS FOR MY *OWN* SYNTHETIC MIND--

"HE WAS THE ONE BEHIND *OUR* OPPONENTS -- AND, I'M CERTAIN, *YOURS!*"

YEAH -- GOLIATH AND THE MAN-APE WORKED FOR HIM *BEFORE!* IT ALL *FITS!*

BUT WITH HIM DRIVIN' A LINE-UP LIKE *THAT*, THE ONLY WAY *I* SEE TO BEAT HIM IS TO TAKE THE BATTLE *TO* HIM...

... AND FOR *THAT*, WE NEED *INFORMATION...!*

BUT THE WEST COAST AVENGERS AND FRIENDS AREN'T THE ONLY TEAM MAPPING OUT ITS STRATEGY IN JERSEY TODAY...

FACE UP TO IT, REAPER! YOU'RE *INSANE!*

YOU CLAIM YOU WANT SIMON WILLIAMS "*BACK*," BUT I *AM* SIMON WILLIAMS, AND YOU'VE GOT ME IN AN *ENERGI-CAGE!*

YOU'RE NOT SIMON! YOU'RE A *MUTATION*-- A *FREAK!*

TELL HIM, MY LOVE!

DO NOT WORRY, NEKRA-- HE *WILL!*

I THINK SHE *KNEW* THAT, MAN-APE! HIS BROTHER IS ALL YOUR MASTER EVER *THINKS* ABOUT!

MY BROTHER WAS A *SAINT*--AN ABSOLUTE *SAINT!*

I'LL *NEVER* REST UNTIL I DESTROY YOU AND THE VISION FOR DESECRATING HIS *MEMORY!*

LISTEN TO ME, ERIC! *NOTHING* CAN REVERSE THE PROCESS THAT MADE ME *WONDER MAN!*

I'M THE ONLY SIMON WILLIAMS THERE EVER *WAS*, OR EVER *WILL BE!*

DO YOU REALLY THINK I'LL *ACCEPT* THAT, FREAK?

WHEN I HAVE THE POWER TO *CHANGE IT?!!*

IF THE BLACK TALON HADN'T *FAILED* ME, I'D HAVE *BOTH* YOU AND THE SYNTHOZOID *ALREADY*--

--BUT WHEN I *DO* HAVE YOU BOTH, I PLAN TO SCAN *BOTH YOUR BRAINS*, AND FEED THE INFORMATION THROUGH ONE OF ULTRON'S COMPUTERS!

WE'LL AUTOMATICALLY *ERASE* ANY THOUGHT NOT COMMON TO *BOTH MINDS*-- AND I'LL BE LEFT WITH *PURE SIMON WILLIAMS* CONSCIOUSNESS, UNTOUCHED BY LATER *CORRUPTIONS*--

--WHICH THE *TALON* WILL THEN IMPLANT IN A ZOMBIE WHICH REPLICATES MY BROTHER AS HE *TRULY WAS!*

WHAT?!! YOU'D PREFER A *RECONSTI-TUTED CORPSE*--

--TO YOUR *REAL FLESH AND BLOOD!?*

BLAST IT, YOU'RE *MY BROTHER, TOO! YOU SCUM--!*

WONDER MAN! DON'T--!

KZZAKK!

THE REAPER WON'T BE THE *ONLY ONE* WHO'S CRAZY IF YOU TRY THAT *AGAIN!*

EVER THE SOLICITOUS *PARENTAL FIGURE*, eh, PYM?

I ASSURE YOU, AS SOON AS MY ALLY HAS GOTTEN WHAT HE WANTS FROM THE *VISION*, I WILL *DESTROY* MY SYNTHETIC "SON"--

--WITH THE *VERY SAME POWER BLAST* THAT KILLS YOU-- "FATHER"!

FATHERS--SONS--BROTHERS--! YOU ALL SOUND LIKE A *SOAP OPERA!*

ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT *BLAKE CARRINGTON* TOO, ROBOT?

I SEE YOUR DIVORCE AND DISGRACE HAS *HARDENED* YOU, PYM! * THAT IS *GOOD!*

YOU WERE MUCH TOO *WEAK* IN YOUR *COSTUMED* IDENTITIES TO PROVIDE ME ANY CHALLENGE!

*AVENGERS CIRCA #212-230.

AND WHAT OF *YOU*--"SON"? YOU USED TO BE A THREAT *ALL BY YOURSELF*, BUT *NOW* YOU WORK FOR *OTHERS!*

ULTRON TWELVE WORKS FOR *NO ONE*, DAD! THE REAPER AND I ARE *ALLIES!* THAT'S *ALL!*

SAYS *YOU!*

NOW *THAT* HIT A *NERVE!*

THE REAPER, YOU, AND *I* ARE ALLIES, ROBOT! MY ZOMBIE HORDES---

--HAVE YET TO DO THEIR *JOB*, TALON!

YOU *PROMISED* ME THE *VISION!*

JUST WATCH ME, DAD!

JUST WATCH!

I WILL CAPTURE MY SON FOR YOU, REAPER! I WANTED MY *FATHER* THE *MOST*, BUT I HATE THE VISION *ALMOST* AS MUCH!

YOU BEGIN TO SOUND LIKE *ME*, ULTRON!

GO, THEN! BUT REMEMBER, I WANT HIM *ALIVE!*

SO SHALL YOU *HAVE* HIM, ALLY!

MAD-MAN!

TRULY A MAD *MAN*--!

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY, IS JUST EIGHT MILES FROM LEONIA, THE ONCE AND FUTURE HOME OF WANDA AND THE VISION -- BUT WHAT A DIFFERENCE EIGHT MILES MAKES!

LEONIA IS SMALL AND FORESTED, RESIDENTIAL, WHILE PATERSON IS YET ANOTHER MONUMENT TO CHEMICALS AND SMOKE! ONCE MEN DREAMED DREAMS OF COMMERCE HERE, BUT THAT DREAM WENT WEST SOME TEN YEARS AGO...

CLOSED

WILLIAMS MANUFACTURING, INCORPORATED

IF WE'RE GOING TO FIND ERIC WILLIAMS, THIS IS WHERE WE *START!*

WILLIAMS MANUFACTURING? BUT IT'S *DESERTED--!*

IT WAS ALL SIMON'S *ONCE*, THOUGH!

THIS PLACE? SIMON WAS A *BUSINESS-MAN?*

AN *INVENTOR'S* MORE LIKE IT, TIGRA! HE WAS PRETTY MUCH A *FAILURE* WHEN IT CAME TO *RUNNING* THINGS!

TELL HER, SHELLHEAD! YOU'RE THE ONLY AVENGER *HERE* WHO WAS *THERE*, TOO!

IT *WAS* A LONG TIME AGO, WASN'T IT? SEEMS LIKE *YESTERDAY* TO *ME--!*

YEAH, IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF THE *ORIGINAL* TEAM-- *ME, GIANT-MAN AND THE WASP CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THOR--*

*AVENGERS #9!

--THAT WE THOUGHT WE FOUND OUR *SIXTH MEMBER!*

"SIMON WAS ONE OF TONY STARK'S MANY *COMPETITORS* FOR A TIME, BUT IN ADVANCING STARK INDUSTRIES, MY, uh, *BOSS* HAPPENED TO MAKE SIMON'S PATENTS *OBSOLETE!* IT SENT WILLIAMS MFG. INTO A *TAILSPIN*...

DAILY BUGLE
INVENTOR ARRESTED FOR EMBEZZLEMENT!
SIMON WILLIAMS ADMITS GUILT!
WILLIAMS

"TONY AND I DIDN'T *KNOW* HIM THEN! WE *CERTAINLY* DIDN'T ATTEND HIS TRIAL, WHERE HE WAS SAID TO BE *SUFFUSED* WITH *GUILT*--

"--BUT SOMEONE *ELSE* DID!

I'LL PAY Mr. WILLIAMS' BAIL BOND!

WHY? I DON'T *KNOW* YOU!

Ah, BUT YOU *WILL*, Mr. WILLIAMS!

I AM THE *ENCHANTRESS*-- THIS IS THE *EXECUTIONER!* IRON MAN, STARK'S BODYGUARD, IS AN *ENEMY* OF OURS-- WOULD YOU LIKE *REVENGE*?

YOU ARE *PENNILESS*--ACCUSED OF A CRIME! WE CAN OFFER YOU *POWER*--!

WHY? WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

YOU'RE *RIGHT!* WHAT AM I ASKING *QUESTIONS* FOR?

"AND SO TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER, SIMON LAY IN THE HIDDEN JUNGLE LABORATORY OF *BARON HEINRICH ZEMO*, THE EVIL ASGARDIANS' *ALLY*--!

RELAX, WILLIAMS! YOU ARE ABOUT TO *SLEEP!*

AND WHEN YOU *AWAKEN*, YOU SHALL BE SIMON WILLIAMS NO *LONGER!* WE SHALL *KEEP* OUR *PROMISE* TO YOU!

YOU ARE BEING BOMBARDED WITH THE MOST POTENT *IONIC RAYS* EVER CONCENTRATED ON *ONE MAN!* THE GENIUS OF ZEMO SHALL CREATE A *LIVING ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION!*

"THUS WAS BORN-- *WONDER MAN!*

I'VE NEVER FELT SO *ALIVE*-- SO CHARGED WITH SHEER *POWER!!*

NOW SHALL WE DESTROY THE *AVENGERS!*

"BUT WE DIDN'T *KNOW* THIS THEN! WE FIRST MET WONDER MAN WHEN HE APPEARED TO *AID* US AGAINST ZEMO'S CREW!

"THAT WAS ZEMO'S *PLAN!*

I AM FROM THE *AMAZON JUNGLE*, AND I AM DYING OF A *RARE DISEASE!*

I HAVE SOUGHT YOU OUT TO ASK YOUR *HELP!*

AFTER THE WAY YOU HELPED *US* TONIGHT, WE'LL BE *GLAD* TO HELP!

"HANK THREW HIMSELF INTO HIS *BIOCHEMISTRY*, AND TONY INTO *LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS*-- WHILE OUR, uh, PHYSICIAN FRIEND *Dr. DON BLAKE* STUDIED THE STEADY DETERIORATION IN SIMON'S *CELLS*--

"-- BUT WE WERE NO CLOSER TO AN ANSWER WHEN SIMON SUMMONED US TO *SOUTH AMERICA*, WHERE HE CLAIMED TO HAVE FOUND *ZEMO!*

"WHAT WE FOUND WAS A *TRAITOR*-- AND A *TRAP!*

"BUT THEN, JUST WHEN HE HAD US AT HIS *MERCY*-- HE *SWITCHED SIDES!*

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING*? OBEY ME, OR YOU WILL NEVER HAVE THE *ANTIDOTE* TO YOUR *DISEASE!*

I *KNOW* THAT-- AND I DON'T *CARE!* THESE PEOPLE TRIED TO *HELP* ME! THEY TREATED ME AS AN *EQUAL!*

IS LIFE SO *DEAR* THAT I'D LOSE ALL *HONOR* FOR IT?

"WE *LOST* ZEMO'S CREW, BUT WE FOUND-- A *HERO!*

WONDER MAN -- YOU *SACRIFICED* YOURSELF FOR *US!* WHY?!

PERHAPS-- EVERY MAN DREAMS OF DOING *ONE* NOBLE THING-- IN HIS LIFE!

NOW I CAN DIE-- KNOWING THAT I DIDN'T LIVE-- IN VAIN!

"AND SO, HE WAS *GONE*--

WELL, I DON'T BELIEVE IT-- NOT THE WAY YOU TELL IT!

THE PART WITH *DEMO*, OKAY-- HE WAS UNDER *PRESSURE* THEN-- BUT I *KNOW* SIMON, AND HE *COULDN'T* BE GUILTY OF *EMBEZZLEMENT*!

YOU'D BUY *BEATING US ALL UP*, BUT NOT *THEFT*!

HE CAN BE *PUSHED AROUND*, AND HE'S *NEVER* KNOWN WHAT TO DO WITH HIS POWERS-- BUT THE MAN INSIDE IS BASICALLY *GOOD*, AS YOU FOUND *OUT*!

THAT'S THE *STRANGEST LOGIC* I'VE EVER *HEARD*!

WELL, TIGRA, THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE TO LOOK *INTO*! IF WE CAN TRACE SIMON'S *LIFE*, AND HIS BROTHER *ERIC'S*, WE MAY BE ABLE TO GET A HANDLE ON WHAT ERIC'S DONE WITH HIS *CAPTIVES*!

AND IF ALONG THE WAY WE PROVE SIMON *INNOCENT*, I'LL BE JUST AS PLEASED AS *YOU*! OKAY?

GOOD *GOIN'*, TIGRA! EVEN WITH HIS VOICE MUFFLED BY THE *HELMET*, TONY'S CLEARLY *NOT THRILLED* AT HAVING HIS *HONESTY* QUESTIONED!

I'VE SEEN ALL THE *OTHER* TEAMS -- EVEN HOOKED UP WITH *SOME* OF 'EM NOW AND AGAIN -- AND *NONE* OF THEM'S ANY TIGHTER THAN WE ARE, *DOWN DEEP*! BUT WE ALWAYS START TO *ARGUE*, SOONER OR LATER!

IT'S JUST *PRIDE*, I GUESS! WE'RE THE *BEST GROUP*, SO WE GOTTA BE THE *BEST INDIVIDUALS*-- SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT!

THAT SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT-- AND WHO'D KNOW *BETTER*, SINCE I USED TO BE THE *PROUDEST ONE OF ALL*?

SURE WISH *BOBBI* WERE HERE! I CAN ALWAYS TALK TO *HER* ABOUT THE DEEP STUFF!

HERE WE *ARE*, PEOPLE! PHASE *TWO*!

PHASE TWO?

SIMON'S HOUSE, CAT-LADY! WHERE HE AND ERIC *GREW UP*!

HOW DO YOU *KNOW* THIS PLACE, IRON MAN?

Oh, uh -- WELL, I WOULDN'T HAVE MENTIONED IT-- TONY DOESN'T DO THINGS LIKE THIS FOR *CREDIT*--

--BUT HE USED TO PAY SIMON'S MOTHER AN *ANNUITY*, WHEN SIMON WAS APPARENTLY *DEAD*!

SIMON'S MOTHER--?

MY OOSH-- I NEVER THOUGHT--!

IF THE VISION'S BRAIN PATTERNS ARE BASED ON *SIMON'S*-- THEN SHE'S ALMOST *HIS MOTHER*, TOO--!

THROUGHOUT THE RECITAL OF SIMON WILLIAMS' LIFE AS WONDER MAN, THE AVENGERS' THOUGHTS HAVE BEEN FOCUSED ON THEIR CAPTURED COMRADE, AS IS ONLY NATURAL--

--AND THE SCARLET SYNTHOZOID BESIDE THEM HAS KEPT CHARACTERISTICALLY TO THE BACKGROUND--

--BUT NOW ALL THOUGHTS ARE SHARPLY FOCUSED ON THEIR LONG-TIME FRIEND-- EVEN AS ALL EYES ARE SCRUPUOUSLY AVERTED...

GOOD GRACIOUS! THE AVENGERS!

IS IT-- ABOUT MY SONS--?

NO ONE NEEDS REMINDING THAT THE VISION HAS JUST RECENTLY BECOME MORE NEARLY HUMAN...!

I'M AFRAID IT IS, Mrs WILLIAMS-- BUT PLEASE BELIEVE ME, WE ONLY WANT TO *HELP* THEM!

IT MAY SURPRISE YOU, HAWKEYE, BUT I DO BELIEVE THAT!

PLEASE, WON'T YOU ALL SIT DOWN?

I MAY BE AN OLD WOMAN, AND A MOTHER, BUT I'M STILL A *REALIST*! SIMON INHERITED THAT TRAIT FROM *ME*!

I *KNOW* WHAT ERIC HAS BECOME, AND WHY YOU HAVE TO *PURSUE* HIM!

WELL, THIS TIME HE'S *KIDNAPPED* SIMON, SO WE'RE LOOKIN' FOR CLUES IN THEIR *PASTS*!

THEIR PASTS--!

"IN THE PAST OR IN THE PRESENT, NO TWO BOYS COULD HAVE BEEN MORE *DIFFERENT!* ERIC WAS ALWAYS THE *SPORTSMAN*-- ALWAYS PUSHING HIS BODY TO ITS *LIMITS*--

"-- WHILE *SIMON*, ON THE OTHER HAND, PUSHED HIS *MIND!* HE GOT *TOP GRADES* IN SCHOOL, AND WOULD RATHER HAVE READ A BOOK THAN *EATEN!*

"IF YOU'D ASKED ME THEN WHO'D GROW UP TO BECOME A *HERO*, I'D HAVE SAID *ERIC* WITHOUT HESITATION!

"BUT *SANFORD*-- THEIR *FATHER*-- WAS A HARD-DRIVING MAN HIMSELF!

"SOMEHOW, NOTHING THEY EVER DID COULD *SATISFY* HIM--!

"MAYBE THAT'S WHAT TURNED ERIC *BAD!* I DON'T KNOW! NO MATTER HOW *REALISTIC* MOTHERS ARE, THEIR SONS CAN STILL *FOOL* THEM!

"I DIDN'T KNOW THAT ERIC STARTED *STEALING*, OR THAT HE STARTED HARASSING SIMON FOR REFUSING TO *JOIN* HIM!

"ALL *I* SAW WAS THAT SIMON WAS TYING MORE AND MORE OF HIS *SELF-ESTEEM* TO HIS *GRADES!*

"THAT BOTHERED ME, BUT IT SEEMED TO MAKE HIM *SUCCESSFUL*, SO I COULDN'T COMPLAIN *TOO* MUCH!

"WHEN HE TOOK OVER WILLIAMS MANUFACTURING FROM HIS *FATHER*, HE MADE *GREAT STRIDES* AT FIRST--

"-- BUT THEN STARK INDUSTRIES *PASSED HIM BY*, AND HE COULDN'T SEEM TO GET BACK IN THE *RACE!* THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HIS *BRAINS* AND HIS *SELF-ESTEEM* BEGAN TO WORK *AGAINST* HIM, THEN!

"HE TOOK THE FIRM'S REVERSES *PERSONALLY*--

"-- AND WHEN HE'D CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT HE WAS THOROUGHLY *USELESS*, HE TURNED TO ERIC FOR *HELP!*

"WELL, ERIC-- I'M ASHAMED TO SAY-- HAD JOINED THE CRIMINAL *MAGGIA* BY THAT TIME, AND I SUPPOSE HE SEEMED THE SUCCESS SIMON *WASN'T*--

"-- BUT WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH THE *GOVERNMENT* AND OTHER DEFENSE CONTRACTORS, *TWISTING ARMS* REALLY ISN'T VERY *USEFUL!*

"STARK HAD THE *PRODUCTS* AND WILLIAMS *DIDN'T*-- THAT WAS THE *REALITY* OF IT!

"AND ERIC BEING *ERIC*-- WHEN HE MET WITH *FAILURE*--

"...STOLE WHAT HE *COULD* FROM THE COMPANY AND *RAN AWAY!*

"*ERIC* WAS THE EMBEZZLER?" *ECHOES HAWKEYE!*

"YES," *SIGHS Mrs. WILLIAMS!* "SIMON TOOK THE *BLAME* FOR IT, SINCE HE'D INVITED ERIC *IN!* BY *THAT* TIME, HIS FEELING OF GUILT AND FAILURE WAS *ALL-ENCOMPASSING!*"

I'M *CERTAIN* THAT'S WHY HE ACCEPTED THE OFFER TO BECOME *WONDER MAN!* IT MUST HAVE SEEMED LIKE A LIGHT AT THE END OF A VERY DARK *TUNNEL!*

I *KNEW* IT! SIMON'S *NOT* A THIEF!

ALL *RI-IGHT!*

WE *KNOW* WHAT HAPPENED TO SIMON AFTER THAT, Mrs. WILLIAMS -- BUT WHAT ABOUT *ERIC?*

WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW IT *THEN*, OF COURSE, BUT HE WAS *TRANSFERRED* -- IF THAT'S THE WORD -- TO THE MAGGIA'S "FAMILY" IN *LAS VEGAS!*

HE STAYED THERE UNTIL HE BECAME -- THE *GRIM REAPER!*

VEGAS, huh? THAT'S JUST WHAT WE *WANTED* -- A PLACE TO START *LOOKING* FOR HIM AND SIMON!

AND IT'S EVEN WEST OF THE *ROCKIES*, SO I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ARGUING WITH THE *WASP!*

I *PROMISE* YOU, MA'AM, WE'LL DO OUR BEST TO SEE NO ONE GETS *HURT* WHEN WE FIND THEM!

I *KNOW* YOU WILL, HAWKEYE, BUT I WON'T *BLAME* YOU, WHATEVER YOU DO!

ERIC BLAMED YOU FOR SIMON'S DEATH, BUT THAT'S BECAUSE IT WAS *EASIER* THAN ADMITTING THE PART *HE'D* PLAYED IN IT!

I'M AN *OLD WOMAN* NOW, AND MY *ONE PRAYER* -- MY *ONLY* PRAYER -- IS THAT YOU PUT AN *END* TO THIS INSANE VENDETTA --

-- AND GIVE ME BACK -- MY *SONS* --!

M- MOTHER--!

BUT YOU'RE-- THE ONE THEY CALL THE VISION--!

AN ARTIFICIAL MAN...!

YES, ARTIFICIAL-- BUT A MAN NONE-THELESS! MY ARMS, MY LEGS-- THESE ARE SYNTHETIC-- BUT MY MIND IS VERY REAL!

AND MY MIND WAS DERIVED FROM SIMON'S!

WHAT?

WHAT DID YOU--??

I-- I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO-- I--

MOTHER, I AM A PART OF YOUR SON!

YOU--

--YOU HAVE SIMON'S MIND--?

I AM WHAT HE WOULD BE, IF HE HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED TO A SYNTHOZOID, INSTEAD OF A-- WONDER MAN!

I AM NOT HE-- I WILL NEVER BE HE--

-- BUT I LOVE YOU, MOTHER! FORGIVE ME!

FORGIVE YOU--!

Oh, VISION! YOU'RE GIVING ME BACK THE GENTLE BOY I THOUGHT I'D LOST FOREVER...!

ELSEWHERE ..

YOU'RE AN *ANIMAL*, ERIC MY LOVE! A WILD ANIMAL, LIKE THE SAVAGE *MANDRILLS* OF MY JUNGLE!

WRONG, BABY! I *USED TO* BE WILD-- BUT SINCE THE AVENGERS KILLED MY *BROTHER*, I'VE BEEN MORE LIKE--

--AN *IRRESISTIBLE FORCE!*

I'VE NEVER *BEATEN* THEM, SEE-- BUT THEY'VE NEVER REALLY BEATEN *ME*, EITHER! AND I'M JUST *ONE MAN*, AGAINST THEIR EVER-CHANGING *HORDES!*

THEY'RE A GROUP WORTH HATING, *YES!*

YEAH! I *HATE* 'EM! KILLED MY *BROTHER*-- THE POOR GUY WAS A *SAINT*, Y'KNOW-- THEY *KILLED* 'IM--

--THEN THEY MADE A *SYNTHOZOID* OUT OF HIM-- AND THEN SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T EVEN *HAVE* A NAME-- SOME *ENERGY FREAK*--!

I'M GONNA *KILL 'EM*, NEKRA-- *BOTH* O' THOSE WALKING INSULTS! THIS TIME I'LL WIPE 'EM *BOTH* OFF THE FACE O' THE EARTH--!

Ahhh, I *LOVE IT* WHEN YOU TALK LIKE THAT!

BUT ERIC-- AS YOUR WOMAN, I MUST KNOW *ONE THING* ABOUT YOUR PLANS--!

ULTRON! HE'S THE ONE WHO *MADE* THE VISION, AFTER ALL! WHY DON'T YOU HATE *HIM?*

HE'S USEFUL-- FOR *NOW!* DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?

EXCUSE ME!

GRIM REAPER, WONDER MAN IS *AWAKENING* AT LAST! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT--

YOU THOUGHT? *YOU THOUGHT?!*

YOU *BLACK SAVAGE!* I DO THE THINKING IN THIS GROUP! GET YOUR STINKING, HAIRY COSTUME *OUT* OF HERE!

NOW WAIT--!

ARE YOU DISPUTING MY *ORDER*, MAN-APE?

REAPER, I HAVE KNOWN OF YOUR BIGOTRY FOR *MANY MONTHS*, BUT I'VE NOT LET IT AFFECT MY OPINION OF YOUR *LEADERSHIP ABILITIES!*

BUT HE WHO WEARS THE PELT OF THE *SACRED WHITE GORILLA* WILL *NEVER* ACCEPT---

SHUT UP!

SHUT UP! NOBODY ARGUES WITH *ME*--

--*ESPECIALLY NOT YOU!!*

YOU'RE A *MADMAN*, REAPER! AND YOU'LL *PAY* FOR THIS!

SHOKK!

Oh, DO I HATE *SPADES!*

BUT ERIC-- *I'M* BLACK, AND I SENSE NO HATRED IN YOU FOR *ME!*

DON'T *SAY* THAT! YOU'RE *NOT* BLACK! YOU'RE A *WHITE* WOMAN!

I'M AN *ALBINO--!*

YOU'RE *WHITE*-- THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS! YOU'RE *UNIQUE*--

--THE PUREST WHITE I'VE EVER KNOWN--!

AT LAST THE *CRISIS* IS COME! I TOLD MYSELF HE WOULD *LEARN*-- BUT HIS KIND *NEVER* LEARNS--!

IF I WERE NOT AN *EXILE*, BARRED FROM THE BLACK PANTHER'S *WAKANDA*, I WOULD *NEVER* BE INVOLVED WITH HIS TWISTED OBSESSIONS--

--BUT EVEN AN *EXILE* HAS A CHOICE OF *ASYLUMS!*

BLACK TALON, MY CREOLE BROTHER-- I CAN NO LONGER WORK FOR A MAN WHO *HATES BLACK SKINS!*

YOU AND I MUST *TALK!*

WHAT HAS HE *DONE*, M'BAKU?

IT WAS HIS TONE-- THERE WAS NO DOUBT! HE IS USING US, NOT AS ALLIES OR EVEN HIRELINGS-- BUT AS SLAVES--!

WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS? NO AMOUNT OF MONEY IS WORTH A MAN'S HONOR! LET HIM TRY TO GET ALONG WITHOUT MY ZOMBIE--!

GET A LOAD OF *THIS*, SIMON! IT MIGHT BE THE BREAK WE *NEED*--!

BREAK? WHAT KIND OF BREAK CAN THERE BE FOR *ME*--?

WHAT?

HE'S GOING TO *KILL ME*, HANK-- MY *OWN BROTHER'S* GOING TO *KILL ME!* IF NOT *THIS* TIME, THEN THE *NEXT*, OR THE *NEXT*--!

I DON'T WANT TO *DIE*, HANK!

BUT-- THE AVENGERS SAID YOU GOT *OVER* THAT!

I THOUGHT I *HAD!* FIGHTING MICHAEL, WHEN EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON ME-- I CAME *THROUGH!**

*AVENGERS #177.

BUT THEN, I HAD NO TIME TO *THINK*-- AND WHEN I *DO* HAVE TIME, I THINK ABOUT--

--OBLIVION--!

"THEY SAY NOW I *WASN'T* DEAD WHEN I FELL IN THE AMAZON JUNGLES--AND MAYBE, TECHNICALLY, THAT'S *TRUE*--

"--BUT I WAS NO MORE THAN A *BODY!*

"THEY *BURIED* ME--AND I LAY IN THE EARTH FOR *YEARS!* THEN ERIC DUG ME UP, TO TAUNT THE *VISION*, AND CARRIED ME AROUND FOR A WHILE.*

"BUT IT WASN'T *ME!* I WASN'T *THERE!*

*AVENGERS #106-108.

"I WAS *DEAD!* WHO CARES WHAT THEY *CALL* IT? THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE! *I WAS DEAD!*

"WHEN THE BLACK TALON MADE ME A *ZOMBIE*, I SHUFFLED FORWARD AT HIS ORDERS LIKE ANY *OTHER* CORPSE--*

*AVENGERS #152.

"--AND *ATTACKED* THOSE I'D DIED TRYING TO *SAVE* IN THE *FIRST* PLACE!

"IN TIME, *'I'* CAME OUT OF THE DARKNESS, BUT I WASN'T REALLY *'ALIVE,'* THE WAY I'D BEEN *BEFORE!*

"I WAS A *WALKING ATOMIC PILE!*

"ERIC *WANTED* ME TO BE HIS BROTHER, BUT EVEN *HE* REJECTED WHAT I'D BECOME! IN MY OWN WAY, I *WAS*--I *AM*--AS SYNTHETIC AS THE *VISION* NOW!*

"I'M *HERE*, BUT I'M STILL SO CLOSE TO THE *DARKNESS*--THE TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE *DARKNESS!*

*AVENGERS #160.

"BECOMING AN AVENGER AT LONG LAST DIDN'T *CHANGE* THAT!*

*AVENGERS #194.

"*LEAVING* THE AVENGERS DIDN'T CHANGE THAT!"

I'VE BEEN *DEAD*, HANK--*GONE!* SURE, I THOUGHT I GOT PAST THAT--

--BUT--YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY AT *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*? "YOU *NEVER* GET *CURED*-- YOU JUST DON'T TAKE *ANOTHER DRINK!*"

FIGHTING MICHAEL, I *FORGOT* MY FEAR--*ANYONE* CAN DO THAT FOR A *WHILE*-- BUT IT DIDN'T FORGET *ME!* IF YOU WANT TO KNOW, I KEPT LEAVING THE AVENGERS SO I WOULDN'T HAVE TO FACE THE FACT THAT I *WASN'T* CURED!

THERE *IS* NO CURE!

I'M *DEATHLY AFRAID*-- OF *DEATH!*

SO DON'T *TAKE* A DRINK! STAND UP AND *FIGHT* THIS MAN WHO WANTS TO KILL YOU!

WHAT *GOOD* DOES IT DO? I' TOLD YOU, HE'LL *ALWAYS* BE AFTER ME!

I'VE BEEN AFRAID OF ERIC SINCE WE WERE *BOYS!* WITH ALL MY POWER, I'M *STILL* HIS *LITTLE BROTHER!*

NOW YOU *LISTEN* TO ME, SIMON! *FORGET* YOUR POWERS!

I HAD POWER ONCE! I HAD *ALL SORTS* OF POWER! BUT WHAT COUNTS IS THE *MAN* WHO HAS THE POWER!

NO POWER, AND NO OTHER *PERSON*, CAN FIX YOUR LIFE FOR YOU! I *KNOW!* IF YOU WANT TO *DIE*, I CAN'T *STOP* YOU--

--BUT IF YOU *DON'T* WANT TO DIE, I CAN'T *HELP* YOU, *EITHER!* IT'S UP TO *YOU*, SO DON'T CRY ON *MY* SHOULDER!

YOU SAY YOU'RE NOT A *REAL MAN*, BUT NEITHER ARE YOU A *BOY!* SO WHATEVER KIND OF MAN YOU *ARE*--

--*BE* ONE!

AN INDEPENDENT OBSERVER MIGHT SUSPECT THAT HANK PYM IS USING PSYCHOLOGY ON SIMON WILLIAMS-- BUT WHAT EFFECT HE'S HAVING MAY TAKE SOME TIME TO SHOW ITSELF! SO LET'S RETURN TO HAPPIER SCENES TO END THIS CHAPTER...

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE!

FOR ALL OF US, Mrs. WILLIAMS! TODAY YOU'VE GAINED SOMETHING VERY LIKE A THIRD SON--

--AND A DAUGHTER, WANDA! A DAUGHTER WHO SHOULD ALSO CALL ME "MOTHER"!

GO IN PEACE, EVERYONE! SOMEHOW, I FEEL THAT THIS DAY WILL MARK THE END OF ALL OUR SORROWS!

EITHER WAY, MOTHER -- WANDA AND I WILL BE BACK SOON!

ALL THOSE YEARS I KNEW OF MY RELATIONSHIP TO SIMON, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT BEYOND HIM-- NEVER THOUGHT TO ASK WHERE HE CAME FROM!

I THINK OUR FAMILY TREES MUST BE THE MOST CONVOLUTED IN HISTORY, VISION!

IT DOES SEEM THAT WAY-- BUT I WELCOME EACH NEW REVELATION!

I HAVE BEEN BORN THREE TIMES NOW-- AS THE HUMAN TORCH, THE VISION-- AND AS MARTHA WILLIAMS' SON!

EACH TIME, I COME CLOSER TO HUMANITY!

AND EACH TIME, I LEARN ANEW WHY MY LOVE WAS INSTINCTIVELY FOR A HUMAN WOMAN!

STRANGE HOW FATE WORKS! WHEN SIMON WAS DRIVEN TO BECOME WONDER MAN, I WAS A RISING STAR--

--BUT NOW I KNOW HOW EASILY IT COULD HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE! I COULD HAVE BEEN THE FAILURE THEN THAT I ALMOST BECAME LATER...!

SIMON AND THE VISION-- SOULS OVERLAID ON OTHER SOULS!

JUST LIKE ME...!

OKAY, VEGAS-- HERE WE COME!

HAWK CALLIN' MOCK! HEY, SWEETIE, HOW YA DOIN'?

MY MOTHER'D BE PROUD OF ME, SPORT-- THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO DO, AND WE DON'T HAVE A "JARVIS," SO I'VE WASHED ABOUT HALF THE FLOORS, AND STARTED ON THE WINDOWS!

THAT'S HOW EXCITING IT'S BEEN SINCE YOU LEFT!

NO SIGN OF ULTRON, huh?

NOT LIKELY, BOWMAN!

WHAT THE--!

KRAASH!

LOOK OUT!

TO BE CONCLUDED IN TWO WEEKS -- IN VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH #2!

AND IN WCA #3, YOU'LL MEET -- THE SIXTH AVENGER! YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO IT IS!